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Jefford's Party Jump Could Tip Scales of Power in Senate

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NEWS TIPS

JEFFORDS' PARTY JUMP COULD TIP SCALES OF POWER IN SENATE

SENATOR'S SWITCH NOT A SURPRISE — "It doesn't come as a big shock to anyone who closely follows politics at this level," says Gerald Kerns, a University of Dayton political science professor. "He's been one of the most progressive Republicans we've seen in a long time, and he's totally out of synch with the Bush agenda."

Sen. James Jeffords has criticized Bush's energy policy and the amount of money his administration has proposed to spend on education, says Kerns, who has been analyzing American politics for more than 40 years. "And fellow Republicans have punished him for his words. I think it was time for him to jump ship."

Kerns says with the move, Jeffords is more closely aligning himself with his constituents in Vermont, a traditionally "environmentally concerned state. I believe he's thinking about voter sentiment."

How will the Bush administration's agenda hold up? "It won't," Kerns says. "For the first time since 1994 the Democrats will have control of the Senate. It will be very tough to get anything of significance accomplished."

For media interviews, contact **Gerald Kerns** at UD at 937-229-3650, at home at 513-583-9672 or via e-mail at gerald.kerns@udayton.edu.

OTHERS, FROM THE OTHER SIDE, MAY FOLLOW — "With a 50-50 Senate, every senator has tremendous power to tip the scales," says the Rev. John Putka, S.M., a political science lecturer at UD. Putka speculates that several conservative Democrats could also change parties at any time. "We've seen these Democrats show a great deal of support for President Bush's agenda. One thing is certain, it will get interesting."

Until, and if, that happens, the Bush agenda "will have a difficult road ahead," Putka adds. "Fortunately, the Senate was designed with the express goal of giving power to the minority. All is not lost for the Republicans."

Putka says Jeffords is answering to Vermont voters, who are increasingly becoming liberal. He has a personal agenda and he, like all senators, has a right to pursue it."

For media interviews, contact **Father John Putka, S.M.**, at 937-229-2594 or via e-mail at john.putka@notes.udayton.edu.